



Disability Employment Service (DES)



The Disability Employment Service is an integral part of The Department for Employment and Learning's Employment Service Division. It provides support to employers to help them recruit people with health issues or disabilities and enable them to retain employees who become sick or disabled in their jobs.

Additionally, DES helps people who are sick and disabled find employment, has responsibility for the choices package available under the Pathways to Work Initiative and also has an Occupational Psychology Service.

How it works



DES provides a range of programmes to assist employers recruit and retain people with health conditions and disabilities into employment. These programmes include:

- (1) Job Introduction Scheme (JIS):** JIS is a job trial lasting up to 13 weeks. It allows the employer and a disabled person to work together to consider if this job or work in general is an appropriate way forward for that individual. Employers receive a subsidy of £75 per week for the duration of the job trial.
- (2) Access to Work (NI) (AtW):** AtW provides individually assessed support to assist disabled people find and keep suitable employment. A range of one off or longer term often indefinite, supports are offered. The supports include: assistance with travel to and from work; the provision of a support worker; provision of equipment; and adaptations to premises.
- (3) Workable (NI)** This programme provides a flexible range of long term supports to assist disabled people with substantial disability related employment barriers to find and keep work. The support needs of each individual are assessed and the provision can include supports such as a Job Coach to assist the disabled worker and their colleagues adapt to the needs of the particular job; payment of developmental costs to the employer; extra training; and disability awareness training.

(4) Pathways to Work Initiative: Pathways to Work is an innovative new approach to help people with health conditions and disabilities to consider their options for returning to work. Under this initiative, there are a number of options of help available to assist customers to progress towards work, or find and retain suitable employment. These include Condition Management Programme, Return to Work Credit, Advisers Discretionary Fund. Anyone who is not in work because of an illness or disability can volunteer to participate in Pathways to Work.

How does an Employer get information or access to these programmes?

If an employer requires additional information on, or access to these programmes, this is available through Employment Service Advisers based in local Jobs & Benefits office/Jobcentres. Additional information may also be obtained through the DEL website.

What can the Occupational Psychology Service (OPS) do to help employers?

OPS offers consultancy, advice and guidance in areas relating to work, disability and health. It is based in Belfast and provides services across Northern Ireland. OPS is available to support employers, clients with disabilities, Employment Service Advisers and also provide occupational psychology consultancy to the Department and other agencies.

Where can I find further information on Disability Employment Service and Pathways to Work?

You can access further information on all DES and Pathways to Work provision on the DEL website – www.delni.gov.uk

DES has also produced a Disability Awareness Pack which may also be of benefit to employers and is accessible via the DEL website.

This gives an awareness of disabilities, their impacts in terms of employment and provides advice on etiquette for dealing with customers with disabilities.

Disability Employment Service is based at Gloucester House, 57 Chichester Street, Belfast BT1 4RA